



ksbdc
kansas small business development center

Growing Kansas Entrepreneurs



Washburn University
Kansas Small Business
Development Center

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2011 EMERGING BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Renaissance Cellars Winery

Owners	Tim Akers, Eric, Marcia, and Rich Stevenson
Nature of Business	Wine Making, Bottling, Distribution & Retail Sales
City, County	St. Marys, Pottawatomie
Phone/Website	785.410.9670 / www.renaissancecellars.com
Structure	Limited Liability Co.
Began	2010
Owners	4
KSBDC Consultants	Daryn Soldan and Karl Klein

Tim Akers and Eric Stevenson had been excitedly researching ideas for a new business and looking forward to the rewards of entrepreneurship. This quest kept bringing them back to the same concept and product. Making and selling wine! So in early 2010, Tim and Eric took the plunge and formed their new venture, Renaissance Cellars Winery. This collaborative effort combined the wine making experience of Eric, and the sales, marketing, and administrative knowledge of Tim. Tim started filing the necessary documents with the help of the Washburn University SBDC, while Eric went to work on smashing 4,000 pounds of grapes to make and bottle their first 400 gallons of wine. All the grapes were purchased in-state with help from the Kansas Grape Growers Association.

Business has been brisk since their grand opening in historic downtown St. Marys with a big payload during the first month of operation. The retail outlet shares a location with Rustic Treasures antiques and has allowed for additional sales opportunities by expanding their offerings into niche market items like, home brewing equipment, old time wet shaving kits, and pipes. Recent restructuring has Marcia and Rich Stevenson joining as members of the LLC, followed by the purchase of a nearby building for increased production and distribution. This will all help with the distribution of their signature product, Fat Friar's Honey Mead, in liquor stores throughout Kansas. In December 2011, Standard Beverage picked up the distribution of Fat Friar Honey Mead, Chambourcin, Norton, Pink Nightmare and Midsummer Night's Dream!

SECRET TO SUCCESS

“Our success is a result of our active involvement in growing a sense of culture and community in St. Marys. A business that grows exponentially without a supportive community will fail as fast as it grows.”

Eric Stevenson, Co-owner



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